

## Message Text

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ACTION SCSE-00

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R 171447Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8213

UNCLAS MOSCOW 3543

E.O. 11."2: N/A

TAGS: CASC (COACHMAN,TSMMA)

SUBJECT: REPATRIATION OF EMMA COACHMAN

REF: STATE 651607

1. COACHMAN REPATRIATION STILL SCHEDULED MARCH 23. EMBASSY PLANS NO ADVANCE PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT AND WOULD PREFER THAT THERE BE NO PRESS INQUIRIES UNTIL AFTER SHE HAS IN FACT DEPARTED. FOLLOWING SUMMARY ON CASE IS FOR POSSIBLE USE OF DEPT SHOULD THERE BE PRESS INTEREST IN US.

2. EMMA COACHMAN WAS BORN IN PITTSBURGH IN 1894 OF LITHUANIAN IMMIGRANT PARENTS. SHE ATTENDED PUBLIC SCHOOL IN PITTSBURGH AND LIVED THERE UNTIL HER MARRIAGE IN 1915. IN 1928 MRS. COACHMAN'S HUSBAND, A LITHUANIAN CITIZEN, WAS HIRED AS A CONTRACT TECHNICIAN BY THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT. THEY LEFT THE UNITED STATES FOR THE SOVIET UNION THAT YEAR,

FULLY INTENDING TO RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES WITHIN A YEAR OR TWO. INSTEAD, MRS. COACHMAN WAS TO SPEND THE NEXT 48 YEARS IN THE SOVIET UNION, UNABLE TO RETURN HOME UNTIL MARCH 23 OF THIS YEAR AT THE AGE OF 80.

3. MRS. COACHMAN'S EFFORTS TO RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES BEGAN IN 1933 WHEN SHE SOUGHT THE ASSISTANCE OF THE AMERICAN  
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LEGATION IN RIGA. SHE LEARNED THEN THAT BY MARRYING A

FOREIGNER SHE HAD LOST HER US CITIZENSHIP UNDER THE US NATIONALITY LAW THEN APPLICABLE. DIVORCED FROM HER HUSBAND, HER ONLY RELATIVES HER PARENTS, BROTHERS AND SISTER IN PITTSBURGH, SHE APPLIED FOR AN IMMIGRANT VISA TO ENABLE HER TO RETURN HOME. HER VISA APPLICATION WAS REFUSED BY THE AMERICAN CONSUL IN RIGA, ON THE GROUNDS THAT SHE WAS LIKELY TO BECOME A PUBLIC CHARGE. WITH NOWHERE ELSE TO GO, EMMA COACHMAN RETURNED TO THE SOVIET UNION. SHE HELD A VARIETY OF TEMPORARY JOBS TO SUPPORT HERSELF AS SHE CONTINUED HER EFFORTS TO RETURN TO THE US. SHE WAS SENT KAZAKHUTAN DURING THE WAS AND WAS PERMITTED TO TRAVEL TO THE US EMBASSY IN MOSCOW ONLY IN 1946, WHEN SHE LEARNED THAT A CHANGE IN THE US NATIONALITY LAWS MIGHT PERMIT THE REINSTATEMENT OF HER US CITIZENSHIP. LACKING BY THEN THE DOCUMENTATION TO SUPPORT HER CLAIM TO US CITIZENSHIP AND UNABLE TO LEAVE THE SOVIET UNION, SHE SETTLED IN LITHUANIA. A COLLECTION OF 1000 RUBLES WAS TAKEN AMONG THE PERSONNEL OF THE EMBASSY IN 1946 TO ASSIST IN HER SUPPORT AS SHE WAS THEN AN INVALID AND UNABLE TO WORK REGULARLY. OVER THE YEARS, AS THE EMBASSY PURSUED ITS EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH HER CLAIM TO US CITIZENSHIP, EMMA COACHMAN KEPT UP A REGULAR CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE EMBASSY, A SERIES OF POIGNANT LETTERS AND PERSONAL APPEALS, WRITTEN IN AN EVER MORE SHAKY HAND. IN 1974, A US PASSPORT WAS ISSUED TO HER AND IN RESPONSE TO AN APPEAL FROM THE EMBASSY AND MRS. COACHMAN, THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES GRANTED HER PERMISSION TO LEAVE THE SOVIET UNION IN MARCH, 1975. AN INVALID, CONFINED TO HER BED FOR THE PAST SEVEN YEARS, MRS. COACHMAN WILL RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES MARCH 23, ON REPATRIATION FUNDS AUTHORIZED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF PAN AMERICAN AIRWAYS. MRS. COACHMAN'S PARENTS, BROTHERS AND SISTER ARE NO LONGER LIVING, BUT SHE IS EAGERLY LOOKING FORWARD TO LIVING OUT HER YEARS IN THE NURSING HOME IN NEW YORK MAINTAINED BY THE TOLSTOY FOUNDATION.

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